

REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

This amendment is in response to the Office Action dated November 20, 2003. Appreciation is expressed for the allowance of claims 3-20 and the indication of allowable subject matter in claim 2.

By the present amendment, claim 1 has been cancelled, without prejudice to the Applicants' right to proceed with the subject matter of this claim by way of a Continuation application. Claim 2 has been drafted into independent form to place it in condition for allowance in light of the indication of allowable subject matter. With regard to this, it is noted that the amending of claim 2 into independent form serves to overcome the claim objection set forth in paragraph 4 of the Office Action. Accordingly, allowance of claims 2-20 is respectfully requested, together with issuance of the present application.

It is also noted that, by the present amendment, the title has been amended to correlate to the present claims.

If the Examiner believes that there are any matters that can be resolved either by way of telephone or personal interview, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' undersigned attorney at the number indicated below.

To the extent necessary, Applicants petition for an extension of time under 37 CFR 1.136. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of

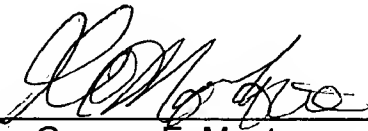
Application No.: 09/997,175

Docket No.: 501.40792VX1

this paper, including extension of time fees, to the Deposit Account No. 01-2135 (Docket No. 501.40792VX1), and please credit any excess fees to such Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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GEM/dlt

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